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## ART MATTERS.

Strolling down Broadway some few days since, and being in the vicinity of Astor place, my visual organs were startled by the sight of a small white building, on which was painted in letters of about a foot high, "THOMAS HICKS' STUDIO." Awe-stricken, I stood and gazed upon the imposing spectacle. Surely none but a master mind could have hit upon such a brilliant expedient to attain popularity, thought I, other painters are content with modest cards, upon their studio doors, but lo! the stupendous greatness of Mr. Hicks!

It would be madness to speculate upon the amount of black and white paint expended upon this sign, suffice it to say the letters are painted with great neatness and regularity while the effect of light and shade is truly admirable, calling forth from the beholder unbounded and unlimited praise. The feeling of height and space is also wonderfully impressive and reminds one strongly of some of those masterpieces of sign painting which we meet with so often on the fronts of the mercantile palaces of Broadway.

Words, however, are inadequate to fully describe the many beauties of this really great work of art.

Entering the studio of Mr. Hicks that gentleman may be discovered hard at work on one of those portraits which have rendered his name immortal. Mr. Hicks' manner may possibly strike you as being somewhat brusque, in fact rude,—but surely a man who is the owner of such a sign may be allowed to look down on the less elevated members of society, and his eccentricities should be regarded merely as evidences of that exalted genius which characterizes himself and sign.

But let us drop *badinage* and come to business. Mr. Hicks has just finished an excellent portrait of one of our most distinguished lawyers which is good in color and execution, strong in expression, but somewhat stiff in drawing, a fault which is to be found in many of this artist's works, the accessories are well painted and give a great feeling of *vérité* to the picture. The head of the distinguished gentleman is expressive of great power and energy, and these characteristics Mr. Hicks has caught and placed upon the canvas with consummate skill, giving us a portrait which is admirable in almost every particular.

Leutze, who has happily recovered from his late severe illness, is at work on a fine semi-allegorical picture of Oliver Cromwell which promises to be one of his best efforts. Cromwell is seated by the side of a chest, from which he is drawing the Magna Charta, while with contemptuous action he brushes aside the crown, sceptre, globe, and other insignia of royalty beneath which the great document has so long been buried. On his right is lying the old white banner of England, while further on we see the back of the canvas on which is scrawled the name of Charles I.

Mr. Leutze has succeeded admirably in the figure of the sturdy reformer; the whole action and expression fully convey the idea intended, the dilating nostril, the scornful smile upon the lip, the angry, impatient gesture of drawing forth

the Magna Charta are all excellent; added to this, the drapery is painted with great care and elaboration of detail, while throughout the whole picture runs a rich, quiet key of color which is in every way delightful.

Bellows is at work on one of his exquisite landscapes, which he calls "In the Country." A merry party of city beaux and belles have quitted the mushroom town and are disporting themselves among the waving trees and green fields of the country,

"With sportive minds they coursed about,  
And shouted as they ran,"

their bright dresses contrasting happily with the half sombre color of the shady nook in which we find them, while through the trees bursts a gleam of sunshine which plays with tenderness upon the flowing hair of the joyous maidens.

Mr. Bellows is always successful in his treatment of pictures of this character, and the work in question is not one whit behind any of his former efforts. The cool, limpid waters of the brook sparkle again under his facile brush, while sky, field and forest are brought before the eye in glowing colors. One particularly fine passage in the picture is the effect of sunlight breaking through the trees in the middle distance; here we have a piece of soft, rich color which has seldom been surpassed, and toward which the eye wanders again and again, attracted by its delicacy and beauty.

De Haas has completed his large picture of "The Passage of the Forts Below New Orleans," and it is now on exhibition at the Studio Building in Tenth Street. Mr. De Haas' success in this, his last work, is decided; he seems to have caught the whole spirit of the subject represented and gives us a startlingly realistic picture. One particularly fine point is the glow which is seen on the smoke, in the distance, caused by the fire from the forts and ships. The strong effect of light and shade throughout is also excellent. There is but one serious fault to be found in the whole picture, and that is in the water; here Mr. De Haas, has been but moderately successful, as there is a great lack of transparency and motion, and in their place an opaque, painty feeling, which is quite unpleasant. Aside from this, the picture is a great one, and as the artist has had the advice of Admiral Farragut, as to the position of ships, &c., it must undoubtedly be a correct representation of the stirring scene which proved of such great importance to the success of the Federal arms during the late unhappy rebellion.

Martin is at work on a large picture of Keene Valley, Adirondacks, which, although in a very unfinished condition, promises well. The broad, peaceful valley stretches down the middle of the picture, girt in by lofty mountains, while towering over all is Tahawus, the grandest peak of the Adirondack range of mountains.

Whittredge has just finished a charming little landscape which he calls "Shawangunk Lake," tender in color and quiet and harmonious in effect. In addition to the above mentioned picture, Mr. Whittredge has just finished a bright, breezy sketch of Newport which is simply exquisite.

J. B. Irving is at work on another of his carefully painted *genre* pictures, entitled the "Wed-

ding Ring," which is noticeable for the excellence of its drapery painting; further than this it is impossible to judge at present, as the picture is but just begun.

LaFarge has on his easel some strongly painted flowers; rich and luminous in color and bold in execution and design. In addition to these the gentleman has just finished the sketch for a large picture of Tennyson's "Lady of Shalott," which is full of poetic feeling and sentiment.

Le Clear has just finished a fine portrait of Edwin Booth; good in color and fully developing and individualizing the characteristics of the man.

Wust is at work on another of those large pictures of Norwegian scenery for which he is becoming so justly celebrated. In this case it is a swollen mountain torrent which rushes and roars along on its mad career, dashing against rocks and seething and surging in its impotent fury. The subject is a wonderfully impressive one, and Mr. Wust has done it full justice; painting it, as it were, *con amore*, and giving us a really grand and imposing picture.

In addition, and in strong contrast, to the above, Mr. Wust has just finished a quiet little landscape of American scenery: a secluded nook in the Catskill woods, where the sun struggles through the leafy roof, sparkling and glistening on the babbling brook which runs adown the middle of the picture.

Constant Mayer has taken up his quarters in the Somerville Building, 82 Fifth Avenue, where he is hard at work putting the finishing touches on his large picture, "Convalescence." The gentleman has just finished an exceedingly clever *genre* picture, which he calls "The Itinerants;" two little Italian musicians, which, by the way, are both portraits, fiddling and harping their way through the streets. It is a quaint, quiet little picture, full of subtle beauty and humor.

In addition to these, Mr. Mayer is at work on a very clever portrait of himself, which is good in color and execution, in addition to being an excellent likeness.

A. Lumley has in his studio a remarkably characteristic drawing of an old Chelsea pensioner, which is exceedingly strong in character and expression, giving us a life-like portrait of the scarred and sturdy veteran.

Rothermel gave a private view of his historical picture of "The Republican Court in the days of Lincoln," on Wednesday evening. The picture is to be on exhibition for some time at the Derby Gallery, 625 Broadway. I hope to notice it, at length, next week.

PALETTE.

## MUSICAL GOSSIP.

It would appear from correspondence to Parisian journals that Wachtel, the celebrated robust tenor, really quits Berlin, and that he will, after making a tour in German cities, visit Paris during its grand exhibition, thereafter trying his professional fortune in this country. No allusion is made by these correspondents to his engagement for three years, previously stated with extraordinary circumstance, or whether that engagement really existed or had been cancelled by mutual consent of the management and himself.

The advent of Niemann undoubtedly interfered with that full sway over Berlin's operatic public